

Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives

May 16, 2005

Dear Colleague:

The memorials and museums that define Washington's Monumental Core express America's connections to its past and its direction for the future.... [T]hese cultural and commemorative public spaces are physical reminders of our collective past and repositories for our most precious artifacts; they help us understand what it means to be an American. -- The National Capital Planning Commission Memorials and Museums Master Plan (2001)

When American and foreign tourists visit Washington and especially the National Mall, they expect to gain a better understanding of our collective history and culture. They see exhibits that educate visitors about our nation's miraculous technological achievements, our military sacrifices and accomplishments, and the documents establishing the most sacred tenets of our democratic traditions.

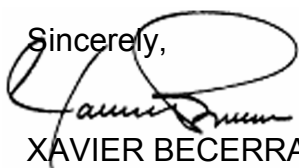
Yet, as demonstrated by the efforts to establish the National Museum of the American Indian and the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the lesson taught by our institutions is incomplete.

Children who visit the museums in Washington should have the opportunity to learn the full history of who we are and who we are becoming as Americans. Nearly 40 million United States residents share a cultural heritage that is only beginning to be understood as wholly American, yet scarcely any of the permanent exhibits in museums in Washington commemorates the American Latino community's cultural contributions.

The bipartisan National Museum of the American Latino Community Commission Act, H.R. 2134, would take the next step toward ensuring that the lessons taught by our premier institutions for the arts and humanities include a better representation of Latino cultural contributions. This effort may take some time but I hope that we will soon be able to say that the nation's Capital truly exhibits America's rich cultural diversity.

If you would like to join 70 of your colleagues and cosponsor this legislation, please contact Joel Najar at 6-3748 or by email at joel.najar@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



XAVIER BECERRA
Member of Congress

Summary of H.R. 2134
To create a commission to study and report on establishment of a
National Museum of the American Latino Community

Cosponsors of HR 2134: Ros-Lehtinen, Baca, Beauprez, Berkley, Berman, S. Brown, Cardoza, Clyburn, Conyers, Costa, Crowley, Cuellar, DeLauro, L. Diaz-Balart, M. Diaz-Balart, Doggett, Faleomavaega, Filner, Gonzalez, A. Green, G. Green, Grijalva, Gutierrez, Hinojosa, Honda, Israel, Jackson-Lee, E.B. Johnson, Tubbs Jones, Larson, Lee, Lewis, Lofgren, Matsui, McCarthy, McDermott, Meek, Meeks, Menendez, G. Moore, J. Moran, Nadler, Napolitano, Norton, Ortiz, Owens, Pallone, Pastor, Payne, Pelosi, Rangel, Reyes, Roybal-Allard, Salazar, Sanchez, Sanchez, Schakowsky, Scott, Serrano, Shimkus, Solis, Stark, Towns, M. Udall, T. Udall, Van Hollen, Velazquez, Weiner, Weller, Wexler.

Sec. 1 Title is “National Museum of the American Latino Community Commission Act”

Sec. 2 There would be 23 members of the commission, appointed as follows:
7 members by the President;
3 voting and 1 non-voting members by the Speaker;
3 voting and 1 non-voting members by the House Minority Leader;
3 voting and 1 non-voting by the Senate Majority Leader; and
3 voting and 1 non-voting by the Senate Minority Leader.

Members of the Commission should be experienced with planning for and the administration of similar museums; or have a demonstrated commitment to the research or promotion of American Latino life, art, culture, history, etc., and possess expertise in museum administration, fundraising, or other relevant experience.

Sec. 3 The Commission will be tasked with producing the following:
a national conference within 9 months of being formed;
a fundraising plan within 18 months; and
a report on their findings and a recommended legislative plan of action within 18 months.

Sec. 4 Establishes that the Commission will be housed by the Dept. of Interior, which shall provide facilities, administrative support, reimbursement, and travel expenses on a per diem basis. Provides for a Director and staff to be appointed by the Commission.

Sec. 5 Sets deadlines for the report and the termination of the commission.

Sec. 6 Authorizes appropriations of \$2,100,000 in FYs 2006 and \$1,100,000 in FY2007.

Please contact Joel Najar with Rep. Becerra’s office at 6-3748 or Ralph Piña with Rep. Ros-Lehtinen at 5-3931 with any questions.